**Child Welfare and Safeguarding**

Cottenham United Colts acknowledges its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of every child and young person who has been entrusted to its care and is committed to working to provide a safe environment for all members. A child or young person is anyone under the age of 18 engaged in any Club football activity. We subscribe to The Football Association’s Safeguarding Children - Policy and Procedures and endorse and adopt the Policy Statement contained in that document.

If you have any concerns you can talk confidentially with the club’s Welfare Officer

Further information is also available via the FA Safeguarding website.  [www.TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/ safeguarding](https://www.histonhornets.co.uk/)

Emailing – safeguarding@cambridgeshirefa.com

**Child Welfare Officers**

The club has appointed two Welfare Officers - Caroline Cole & Joanne Banks whose details are provided at the end of this document. In addition to Child Safeguarding training, the Welfare Officers have undertaken additional Welfare Officer training. The Welfare Officers will liaise directly with the Cambridgeshire FA Welfare Officer and will be familiar with the procedures for referring any concerns. They will also play a proactive role in increasing awareness of Respect, poor practice and abuse amongst their Club members.

The Welfare Officers keep records of qualifications and checks of anyone in direct contact with children or young people, and ensure all volunteers are kept informed of expiry dates of qualifications so they can be renewed in a timely fashion.

Any child, young person or parent who has child welfare concerns and feels they are unable to speak to one of their coaches about it should contact one of our CWOs directly.

**Policy Key Features**

The key principles of The FA Safeguarding Children Policy are that:

* The child’s welfare is, and must always be, the paramount consideration
* All children and young people have a right to be protected from abuse regardless of their age, gender, disability, race, sexual orientation, faith or belief
* All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
* Working in partnership with other organisations, children and young people and their parents/carers is essential.

We acknowledge that every child or young person who plays or participates in football should be able to take part in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from poor practice and abuse. Histon Hornets Football Club recognises that this is the responsibility of every adult involved in our club.

Cottenham United Colts Football Club has a role to play in safeguarding the welfare of all children and young people by protecting them from physical, sexual or emotional harm and from neglect or bullying. It is noted and accepted that The Football Association’s Safeguarding Children Regulations (see The FA Handbook) applies to everyone in football whether in a paid or voluntary capacity. This means whether you are a volunteer, match official, helper on club tours, football coach, club official or medical staff.

**Coaches’ and Managers’ qualifications**

The club follows all FA guidelines as regards qualifications of coaches who interact directly with children and young people.

In particular, the club follows the following rules to ensure child welfare is paramount at all times:

1. Each team has a named Coach/Manager who is qualified as a Level 1 FA Coach and has up-to-date FA First Aid qualification, FA Child Safeguarding qualification and DBS check.
2. Each team has a minimum of one assistant coach/manager who has up-to-date Child Safeguarding qualification and DBS check.
3. All assistants will have a minimum of an up-to-date Child Safeguarding qualification and DBS check as a pre-requisite for working with children.
4. At all matches and training sessions, there will always be a minimum of two qualified adults present, all of whom have an up-to-date Child Safeguarding qualification and DBS check, and at least one of whom has an up-to-date First Aid qualification and at least one of whom is an FA-qualified coach.
5. If any of a team’s named Coaches/Managers or assistants cannot attend a match or training session, alternatives must be found with sufficient qualifications that point 4 (above) is still fulfilled. These alternative coaches or assistants must be registered members of Cottenham United Colts within the FA’s Whole Game System.

All adults involved with helping to coach a team must be DBS checked and Child Safeguarding qualified as a minimum (for example, if there is a third coach at a match/training session).

**Recruitment**

We endorse and adopt The FA’s Responsible Recruitment guidelines for recruiting

volunteers and we will:

* Clearly discuss and explain what the role is and what tasks it involves to any potential volunteer
* Request identification documents
* As a minimum, a member of the Cottenham United Colts Committee will meet and chat with the applicant(s) before accepting them as volunteers
* Where the volunteer will be undertaking a regulated role, we will request that they apply for an FA accepted Enhanced Disclosures and Barring Service (DBS) check in line with current FA policy and regulations. If a volunteer refuses to submit an application, they will not be accepted into the Club.

 The club’s priority and responsibility is to safeguard children and young people involved in football. Alongside the very beneficial aspects of modern communication technologies we recognise that there are also increased risks to children and young people. These risks must be appropriately managed.

**Social Media & Communications Policy**

The club’s priority and responsibility is to safeguard children and young people involved in football. Alongside the very beneficial aspects of modern communication technologies we recognise that there are also increased risks to children and young people. These risks must be appropriately managed.

Everyone involved in football must recognise that the responsibility to safeguard exists both on and off the field of play.

It’s essential that club officials (committee members, coaches/managers, assistants, first aiders and team administrators), referees, parents and players make informed decisions about how they use the internet, mobile phone and email communications.

Club officials and those in a position of responsibility at Cottenham United Colts Football Club must ensure they communicate responsibly.

Communicating with players

All communications from Cottenham United Colts Football Club club officials with players should be via the parents/guardians specified as the contact when the player is registered with the club on the membership system for that season.

CLUB OFFICIALS MUST NOT CONTACT PLAYERS DIRECTLY THROUGH ANY FORM OF DIGITAL COMMUNICATION (i.e. emails, text, social media such as Facebook, twitter, snapchat, WhatsApp etc).

If a player contacts a club official directly, any replies from the club official must include the parent/guardian and advise that future communications are done through the parent/guardian.

Use of social media

The club’s website and social media administrator maintains and monitors a Facebook and Twitter account as a way of getting club messaging across to the widest audience possible. This is used for marketing and raising awareness of relevant events, news and achievements.

Club officials may request to publish social media posts through the club’s Facebook and Twitter profile via the club’s social media administrator. The administrator will ensure all content complies with this policy.

If any other social media profiles/groups are created by club officials for team specific communications (e.g. WhatsApp or Facebook groups), this must be with the parent/guardian only and using contact details authorised by the parent/guardian on the player's record and not include any players. Communications must be solely about football matters e.g. fixtures, cancellations and team selection. At no time should there be any personal communications, ‘banter’ or comments. It is the responsibility of the club official who setup the group to maintain this policy and raise any concerns to the CWO. WhatsApp group settings can be changed so only administrators receive replies.

The FA have published the below as best practice in relation to social networking:

Do

* Ensure all the privacy settings are locked so that that the page(s) are used explicitly for club or league matters and are not used as a place to meet, share personal details or have private conversations
* nominate a club official to monitor the social networking page regularly and remove access for anyone behaving inappropriately
* make sure everyone within your club/team knows who is responsible for monitoring the content of the social networking areas and how to contact them
* provide all users with The FAs best practice guidance on using social networking sites
* gain written parent/guardian permission before access is given to U18s
* inform the CWO if you have received inappropriate communications online, keeping a record of any inappropriate, threatening or offensive material as this may be needed as evidence.

Don’t

* Unless a child/young person is a direct relation, the club officials should not:
* accept as a friend, players or referees U18 on social networking sites they are members of or share their own personal social networking sites with children or young people involved in youth football
* make contact with children or young people known through football outside of the football context on social networking sites
* use internet or web based communications to send personal messages of a non-football nature to a child or young person
* engage in any personal communications, ‘banter’ or comments.

Use of images

Any images posted on social media or the club’s website must not include named individuals and the club official taking the photo must ensure that consent has been provided by the parent/guardian to use safe images on digital media (this consent is given upon registration in the membership system).

PARENTS ARE REQUESTED TO NOT POST IMAGES OF PLAYERS ON SOCIAL MEDIA WITHOUT THE CONSENT OF THE PARENTS OF THOSE PLAYERS.

Communicating with referees under 16

As with players, most referees are still minors and must be safeguarded and treated with respect. Some of these referees are as young as 14 years old and may be carrying out the activity for the purposes of Duke of Edinburgh awards (DofE) etc.

FOR REFEREES UP TO THE AGE OF 16 (AGED 14 & 15), COMMUNICATIONS MUST BE THROUGH THE PARENT/GUARDIAN AND CLUB OFFICIALS MUST NOT CONTACT REFEREES DIRECTLY THROUGH ANY FORM OF DIGITAL COMMUNICATION.

The club maintains a secure referee list to be used by club officials only and includes the parent/guardian contact details.

Communicating with referees under 18

For referees that are aged 16 and 17, It’s important that we recognise they are not ‘adults’ and as such we have a responsibility to safeguard them as we do any other young person involved in football.

FOR REFEREES UNDER 18 (AGED 16 & 17), COMMUNICATIONS CAN BE DIRECT BUT MUST INCLUDE A COPY TO THE PARENT/GUARDIAN.

Mobile phone and email contact details for referees under the age of 18 should not be hosted on website pages that can be accessed by the general public and must be held securely and displayed within private areas for the purpose of the activities they are undertaking with the written permission of their parent/guardian.

The guidance below is based on FA recommendations for best practice in relation to communication with 16- 17 year olds who hold a position of trust and/or responsibility within football:

* Parent/guardian consent should be given prior to email, social networking and mobile phone communications with young people holding a position of trust.
* Both parties to only communicate for the purpose of organising referees at matches.
* Email communications between the club officials and referee should copy in the referee’s parent/guardian.

Assistants

On occasion, managers may have U14’s to U18’s assisting at training sessions or matches for the purposes of DofE etc. Again, these assistants are still minors and the same rules of communication as for players and referees. Safeguarding Children & Young People Children and young people must be advised by their coaches, parents/guardians and CWO to always tell an adult they trust about communications that make them feel uncomfortable or where they’ve been asked not to tell their parent/guardian about the communication.

IF ANY INAPPROPRIATE COMMUNICATION OR CONTENT IS SHARED BETWEEN AN ADULT AND A PLAYER/REFEREE THIS SHOULD BE REPORTED IMMEDIATELY TO THE CWO WHO, WHERE NECESSARY, WILL SEEK ADVICE FROM THE COUNTY FA WELFARE OFFICER AND/OR STATUTORY AGENCIES AS APPROPRIATE.

**Reporting concerns**

If there are concerns regarding the appropriateness of an individual who is already involved, or who has approached us to become part of Cottenham United Colts Football Club, guidance will be sought from The Football Association. It is noted and accepted that The FA will consider the relevance and significance of the information obtained via the DBS Process and that all suitability decisions will be made in accordance with legislation and in the best interests of children and young people.

It is accepted that The FA aims to prevent people with a history of relevant and significant offending from having contact with children or young people and the opportunity to influence policies or practice with children or young people. This is to prevent direct sexual or physical harm to children and to minimise the risk of ‘grooming’ within football.

Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility. If you are worried about a child, it is important that you report your concerns; no action is not an option.

·         If you are worried about a child then you need to report your concerns to the Club Welfare Officer.

·         If the issue is one of poor practice the Club Welfare Officer will either:

·         Deal with the matter themselves or

·         Seek advice from the CFA Safeguarding Office

·         If the concern is more serious – such as possible child abuse, where possible, contact the CFA Welfare Officer first, then immediately contact the Police or Children’s Social Care.

·         If the child needs immediate medical treatment take them to a hospital or call an ambulance and tell them this is a child protection concern. Let your Club Welfare Officer know what action you have taken, they in turn will inform the CFA Safeguarding Officer.

·         If at any time you are not able to contact your Club Welfare Officer or the matter is clearly serious then you can either:

Contact your CFA Safeguarding Officer directly

Contact The FA Safeguarding Team on 0800 169 1863 or safeguarding@thefa.com

Contact the Police or Children’s Social Care

Call the NSPCC 24-hour Helpline for advice on

0808 800 5000 or text 88858 or email help@nspcc.org.uk

**Whistle blowing**

Cottenham United Colts Football Club supports The FA’s Whistle Blowing Policy. Any adult or young person with concerns about an adult in a position of trust with football can ‘whistle blow’ by contacting The FA Safeguarding Team:

* **Tel**: 0800 169 1863,
* **Address**: The FA Case Manager at The Football Association, Wembley Stadium, PO Box 1966, London SW1P 9EQ,
* **email**: safeguarding@thefa.com

Alternatively anyone with concerns can go directly to the Police, Children’s Social Care or the NSPCC.

Cottenham United Colts Football Club encourages everyone to know about The FA’s Whistle Blowing Policy and to utilise it if necessary.

**Bullying**

We acknowledge and endorse The FA’s identification of bullying as a category of abuse. Bullying of any kind is not acceptable at our club. If bullying does occur, all players or parents/carers should be able to tell, and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly. Incidents need to be reported to the Welfare Officer. In cases of serious bullying the CFA Safeguarding Officer may be contacted.

**Respect Codes**

Respect codes of conduct for players, parents/spectators, officials and coaches have been implemented by Histon Hornets Football Club. In order to validate these Respect codes of conduct the club has clear actions it will take regarding repeated or serious misconduct at club level and acknowledges the possibility of potential sanctions which may be implemented by the County FA in more serious circumstances.

**Further information and Contacts**

The FA’s Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures are available via [www.theFA.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding](http://www.thefa.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding)

Further advice on Safeguarding Children within the Cottenham United Colts can be obtained from one of the Club’s WOs or the CFA Welfare Officer :

**Caroline Cole & Joanne Banks (**Cottenham United Colts Welfare Officer)

E: welfare.cucfc@gmail.com

**Diane Bradshaw** (County FA Safeguarding Officer)

T: 01223 209021

E: safeguarding@cambridgeshirefa.com

**NSPCC**

T: 0808 800 5000 (24 hour helpline)

E: help@nspcc.org.uk